

SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND DROPOUT PREVENTION

HEARING BEFORE A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS UNITED STATES SENATE ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

SPECIAL HEARING

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SCHOOL DROPOUTS AND DROPOUT PREVENTION

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1987

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES, EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Jacksonville, FL.

The subcommittee met at 9:15 a.m., at the Sandalwood Junior and Senior High School, Hon. Lawton Chiles (chairman) presiding.
Present: Senator Chiles.

NONDEPARTMENTAL WITNESSES

Senator CHILES. Thank you very much. I am delighted to be here, and certainly want to thank our principal, Gail Gerry and our Principal John Cochran, from the junior high school, and Linda Lewis, who certainly worked with our staff to put all this stuff together. And, of course, we appreciate the superintendent, Herb Sang, who is going to be with us in a little while, and to all of the staff at Sandalwood Junior and Senior High School. We thank you very much for your help.

I am delighted to convene our hearing. As a native Floridian and Senator, I have certainly always been proud of our State. Florida is a national leader in many areas: high technology and citrus production and tourism, just to name a few. But there is one field where Florida has too visible a leadership role that we are not too proud of now, and that is the level of high school dropouts.

It has been said that education is an investment in the future, and I am sure that statistics bear that out.

High school graduates generally have an easier time finding a good job. They certainly earn more money than dropouts, and they are less likely to be poor. Yet, in spite of these statistics, it seems that many of our young people don't believe in investing in education.

During the 1985-86 year, over 40,000 of our young people in Florida dropped out of school. Our graduation rate for 1985, according to the U.S. Department of Education, was 61.2 percent. That means only 6 out of 10 Florida students earned a high school diploma.

For 1984, the graduation rate was 62.2 percent. That is only one-tenth of 1 percent difference; but, if you extend that to the year 2000, we would only have 50 percent of our students actually graduating.

In comparison to other States, we are ranking now 49th in graduation rate. And, for minorities, the picture is even more dismal. A recent study in Dade County estimated that, in 1985, the graduation rate for our black youths was 44.1 percent; Hispanics, the figure was 46.8 percent.

Why are our young people dropping out of school? I don't know the answer to that question, and I don't think there is one answer.

Research tells us that there are a number of causes for the dropout problem, but that is one of the reasons why I am here. I want to hear from you and from the people on our panel, the experts in the field, and individuals who have worked with students and dropouts, and we are going to hear from some students themselves who have dropped out, and we want to try to hear and understand why this is happening.

I want to hear how the dropout problem affects your particular area of focus, whether it be law enforcement, family life, or business. And, most of all, I want to find out what we can do to make dropouts listen. How can we reach these young people? How can we get across to troubled young people that they may not find all the answers in the classroom, but they sure won't find them out in the street. How do we persuade students that education is an investment in the future?

I am as serious about education and as concerned about the dropout problem as I am about the future of this country.

As a matter of fact, though, choosing between the two, there is no reason to choose, because they are one and the same. Dropping out or graduating is the future of this country, and it is the future of the young people who choose one road over the other.

I expect to gain a greater insight in the dropout problem today and also to learn good ideas. I hope we will be able to convince some of these who are thinking of dropping out that it is not a wise move; in fact, dropping out is a losing proposition.

Getting on with the hearing, I hope we have got a lot of young people who will be listening, and I hope we will be able to find a way to lower the dropout statistics and be proud of that accomplishment.

I think we are very fortunate today to have our commissioner of education as our first witness. Commissioner Castor is one who is certainly concerned about this problem, has been, and is doing something about that concern, as the State of Florida is.

I have introduced some legislation in Congress to provide up to \$50 million for State and local governments to use, to make some grants available to them so they can experiment in some dropout prevention programs, and so that we can look at some State programs and local programs that seem to be working.

The reason for that legislation primarily is to have sort of a carrot or an inducement to get States involved in this. Thank goodness, Florida didn't need that inducement to start it; it was already involved. The

legislature has appropriated some \$4 million this year, up from \$1 million in previous times, and Commissioner Castor is now starting a very innovative, exciting program that I hope she will tell us about this morning. I won't talk about that for her, but yesterday Commissioner Castor and I participated in a proclamation from the Florida Cabinet making this Dropout Prevention Week, and that sort of is the kickoff in trying to raise public awareness in the State, which we think is very necessary to do, and so, we will be holding this hearing today and another hearing in Miami and some other meetings around the State. Commissioner Castor, we are delighted to have you as our opening witness.

STATEMENT OF HON. BETTY CASTOR, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION,
STATE OF FLORIDA

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you. Good morning, Senator, and thank you for the opportunity to be your lead-off witness for the public hearing.

We share your concern for the problems of dropouts in Florida and the country, and we certainly look forward to working with you.

Yesterday, as we declared dropout public education enemy No. 1, today I want to briefly review the Florida situation for you, provide you with some of our approaches, and finally give you a few suggestions for Federal initiatives.

In 1985-86, the last year for which we have statistics, Florida had more than 40,000 dropouts. To put that into context, that is more students dropping out of school in their senior year than entered all of our universities and community colleges.

Those statistics are somewhat suspect and, as educators, we sometimes get defensive about them, but it is widely recognized that about one third of our ninth graders are not making it to graduation.

It is a national problem. It is not unique to Florida. Regardless of the accuracy of the statistics, we have a massive problem. Nothing less than the future of Florida and our Nation is at stake.

Beyond the statistics is the human tragedy: wasted lives, wasted lives of children, and wasted lives of their children.

The impact on society is enormous. Employers don't get the work force they need, businesses don't get educated and financially capable consumers.

Society and government bear the responsibility of taking care of those who can't take care of themselves, and the problem reproduces itself through the children of dropouts.

Everywhere I go, people ask why, why are so many students saying, "I quit?" I wish there were a simple answer, but there isn't one. I will attempt to give you the ones our research and our hunches show to be the most common.

First is a feeling of alienation, there is no sense of belonging among dropouts. They honestly believe that nobody cares, so why should they try.

Second is a feeling of hopelessness. Without role models in front of them, many dropouts resign themselves to the lifestyles of those around them and nothing more.

Third, the social and economic conditions at home. Many dropouts come from economically and socially deprived households, frequently with one parent, who in many cases, also is not educated. These children start school with a deficit so far behind that they never catch up.

The social groups, the neighborhood groups, oftentimes the churches, are not there to play the role that they once played in our society. Therefore, the school oftentimes is the only viable structure that can impact the lives of these students, and that is why it is so important that we make the commitment and undertake the task of dropout prevention through the school, because it is the one institution that remains in this country and in this State.

So what is Florida doing about it? We are attacking it on several fronts. First, you were with me yesterday as we launched the Florida compact, the new idea, an agreement between business and education to guarantee jobs to those at-risk students who stay in school.

The dropout problem must be addressed by all segments of our society, not just the education system. And business has already demonstrated a willingness to participate. This is just one way for them to do it.

If a business will take an interest in a student, that interest can sometimes replace the social structures that are no longer there, and, in addition, guarantee some income in return for staying in school and ultimately getting that high school diploma.

In Broward County, the compact is already underway. We won't reinvent the wheel in Florida, we will build on a program based on concrete results such as the Boston compact.

Every school district in Florida now has a dropout prevention plan. These were approved by our department before the advent of the last school year and are being implemented this year. It forces every school district to attack the problem in a comprehensive way.

You will hear this morning about the variety of programs here in Duval County, where there has been a dropout prevention plan in place for a number of years.

The number of students being served by dropout prevention programs increased from 21,000 to nearly 40,000 students because of these programs. Funding now is a part of the basic public school formula in the State of Florida. It is true that we have targeted community based special grants, and this year, as you mentioned, they increased to over \$4 million.

But, in the basic program this year, we are spending \$100 million on dropout prevention, so that every school district in Florida has a program.

We need to do more with teenage pregnancy and young mothers, because that is where the cycle of poverty begins, and we dill. Expansion of prekindergarten programs, Senator, is where the long-range solution lies.

We must take the disadvantaged poor 4 and 5 year olds, get them into prekindergarten programs, and allow them to catch up before they start regular school.

The last session of the legislature more than tripled the amount of money being spent in prekindergarten programs, from \$500,000 to \$1.6 million, but that is just the beginning of that program.

We have many programs, including teachers as advisors, in which teachers take more of an interest in individual students, and are compensated for that; and expanded summer enrichment programs at which at-risk students are targeted.

We have 16 new teenage parent child-care centers now in operation by school districts across the State. However, the lack of child care for teenage mothers is one of the primary causes for dropping out.

The department has a dropout prevention manual, sponsored a dropout prevention conference, and provided a great deal of technical assistance, especially to our mid-sized and small district schools.

Many school districts are doing an excellent job, others, have just begun. We can always use more help.

Which leads me to my final list, some suggested Federal initiatives. First, I want to commend you so much for your dropout prevention bill, which will provide \$50 million for pilot projects and evaluations of dropout prevention programs. These are especially needed in areas where school districts don't have resources to get the programs going.

I also want to commend you for fighting the Reagan administration's proposed cuts in education, which includes a \$100 million cutback in drug education money that we can ill afford in this State.

There is no doubt about a direct connection between drug abuse and dropping out of school, and education is our best hope of curtailing drug and alcohol abuse among young people.

I would like to suggest a few more areas of emphasis. First, expand the Federal Upward Bound Program. This program is designed to get students who are capable of success but economically disadvantaged into college. It includes Saturday counseling, summer programs, and other aids.

The program currently starts in the 11th grade. I would suggest that you expand it to include 9th and 10th graders. This is when the serious thought of dropping out and the ability to drop out begins, and this is when we still have the chance to turn that around.

Next, I suggest that you target job training partnership funds for at-risk students. This popular program helps prepare the work force. Why not identify at-risk students, which is relatively easy to do, and target existing resources from the JTPA program for that.

The Economic Security act has money earmarked for math and science programs. Again, if we can just redirect some of that money to at-risk students, we would be solving a social dilemma as well as a need for more math and science majors.

For example, rather than try to teach algebra to a child who is obviously not going to college, risking another dropout statistic, teach that

child technical drawing, keep him or her in school with an employment skill.

This money can come from the Economic Security Act, but it needs to be targeted more to the at-risk student; and, most important, the long-range solution, I am convinced, lies in educating our youngest children. The Head Start Program is one that has proven successful. It is one where the results are in. The longitudinal study of those children who were in the Head Start Program 20 years ago is well documented. It has been enormously successful. The investment in that program is perhaps the most important investment that could come out of the Federal budget.

We are now working on a State Head Start Program modeled after the Federal program. Next year, in my budget, we will recommend a \$7 million increase in that program and, taking the Federal Head Start dollars, we will be well on our way toward targeting 4-year-old disadvantaged students for classroom and early school education in our State.

We could talk to you for days about dropout prevention, and that is why I am so happy that you are taking the entire week from your busy schedule to travel our State, listening to our young people as well as our experts, and draw your own conclusions.

I think that your time will be very well spent. We appreciate your help, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Senator CHILES. Thank you very much, Commissioner Castor, for taking your time to come and tell us about Florida's efforts to reduce the dropout rate.

Certainly, it is only with this cooperative planning effort that we are going to be able to make inroads, and I am so happy that you have made dropouts your top priority.

A recurring theme I hear is the need for mobilizing all of our community resources to combat the dropout problem. How can we best encourage that kind of cooperation to make sure we have a successful program? I know the compact is a part of the way to do it now.

Ms. CASTOR. It has to happen at the local level. It has got to be a community effort. Somehow, we have to convince everyone in this State that the economic future of Florida depends on educating all of our young people.

The cost of incarceration of people in our prison system, the cost of HRS services for uneducated people, is simply staggering.

We need to redirect our resources, even though some of these programs are expensive, because you have to deal with small groups of students, almost on an individualized basis. There simply is no comparison about making the investment in a young person and their educational environment any better than that.

I think the schools must step out and take the lead. They are the institution that crosses every economic line. They are institutions which already have parent groups as a part of the volunteer services. They have the educational leadership. They must step out into the commun-

ity and build those alliances. We can't expect that it will happen somewhere else. Schools are the central part. They must become the community focus, and they must be used by the community, and I think we can do a far better job in providing that leadership from the district level.

Senator CHILES. I know that that is right. The one thing that I have realized is that we are not going to solve this in Washington. There is no Federal law that we can write. And I think you are right, we are not going to solve it from Tallahassee either.

Along with that, though, how do you plan to evaluate some of those programs that we hope will be springing up, and that we know are springing up, from the local and county level, and then disseminate that information to other counties?

As we know, the Boston compact worked there, and we are now trying to build on that. Do you have some way, some plan of trying to do that?

Ms. CASTOR. Yes; I think it is very important that, as we target our resources, \$100 million of State dollars is a mighty big commitment. I think it is imperative that we have close evaluation.

We require of every school district a plan, a comprehensive plan, for dealing with five classes of students. Part of the plan had to include efforts at alternative education.

For instance, we know that many of our students do not fit into the regular school environment. Our high schools are large in Florida. Students get lost. It is not easy to grow up with some of the pressures on young people today.

Every county plan has to include detailed plans for dealing with substance abuse, both drug and alcohol. Every plan has to deal with the problem of teenage mothers, which some school districts, I must say, have been reluctant to get into.

Every plan had to deal with discipline. In Florida, unfortunately, some school districts' discipline called for what I think as an easy solution: expulsion. It is not a solution. We don't need to discipline students by kicking them out of school; we need to discipline them by keeping them in school.

Senator CHILES. To me, the one indicator I have seen is, the immediate indicator is, those with more absences are always going to be those who drop out. So we can easily see that expulsion would not be.

Knowing you were going to ask us for certain things, one of your requests was expanded funding for Upward Bound so that 9th and 10th graders could be included. The expanded funding would probably be necessary; but, according to the Congressional Research Service, those students that have completed the eighth grade are eligible. So we won't have to change the law. They can participate under the current law, so it is within each State how to target moneys under the Program.

In 1987, there was \$75 million appropriated for Upward Bound. Florida's share was \$1.5 million of that.

Your other request, of the target job training partnership for dropout prevention, some moneys are going for that.

The 99th Congress made two changes. One, each service area is required to assess the reading and math skills of the participants in the summer youth program and prescribe remedial programs that are available; and, two, a portion of the funds of the program must be set aside for dropout prevention activities, schoolwork assistance programs, and literacy programs. So there is an eligibility there.

The targeted funds for the Economic Security Act, students at risk, that certainly is something that we will look at to see if there is a way of trying to do that.

And we certainly want to assure you that we will continue to try to resist any cuts. The administration had proposed over 36-percent cuts overall in education, and, as you know, 50-percent cuts in all of the drug education and prevention that we had enacted with great fanfare the year before.

Our bills are not law yet; they are still winding down in the Budget Act. We did provide a mark that would resist all of those cuts, and we added between \$3 and \$4 million overall for additional education funding.

We have already lost some of that money in the way the Appropriations Committee divided up the pie, but we are still going to try to hold these programs harmless and see if we can make some kind of increases.

Again, I am so encouraged by your efforts and the efforts that I see the legislature and the State making in this regard, and we certainly look forward to continuing to try to fight this battle together. Thank you very much.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you.

STATEMENTS OF:

JEANNIE CANFIELD

JOHN HARRIS

CHERANNA MUSSELWHITE

ROOSEVELT BROWN, JR.

TOMMY WILLIAMSON

SARA HUDSON, YOUNG PARENTS PROGRAM, DARNELL COOKMAN

Senator CHILES. Our next panel, "Why Students Drop Out—The Students' Perceptions," and we will have Jeannie Canfield, John Harris, Cheranna Musselwhite, Roosevelt Brown, Jr., and Tommy Williamson. So we will ask you to each sort of introduce yourselves now, and we will start down on the end.

Miss CANFIELD. My name is Jeannie Canfield.

Mrs. HUDSON. My name is Sara.

Miss MUSSELWHITE. Cheranna Musselwhite.

Mr. HARRIS. John Harris.

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Tommy Williamson.

Mr. BROWN. Roosevelt Brown.

Senator CHILES. Now, my understanding is that you have sort of a mix, and that some of you have not dropped out, and others have, but I want to just kind of ask you some questions.

What are the pressures that are there from other students or from kids that are on the outside that would sort of encourage you to drop out? You know, what are some of the reasons? What do you hear? What are some of the forces that are out there that would sort of encourage you to drop out?

Miss CANFIELD. Well, it's not too much peer pressure, it's classes that we're taking. I mainly dropped out because of boredom. I was not allowed to take some of the classes that I wanted to. There was more requirements that we had to take.

I like a challenge. I like to take classes that expect more of me, not classes that I know that I can—that I can do, that I basically can pass with no problems. I want something harder, something more challenging.

Senator CHILES. So you just weren't challenged enough, you wanted something that was tougher?

Miss CANFIELD. Uh-huh.

Mrs. HUDSON. I represent the Young Parents Program at Darnell Cookman. I didn't actually drop out, but I was forced to drop out because, in my junior year of high school, I got married and discovered that I was pregnant, and that was one of the pressures of dropping out, because socially that was one of the pressures.

And, if it wasn't for the Young Parents Program, then I would have been forced to drop out, because I wouldn't have had any child care.

Senator CHILES. How did the Young Parents Program work for you?

Mrs. HUDSON. I don't understand. How did it work?

Senator CHILES. What did it give you?

Mrs. HUDSON. Well, oh, Young Parents Program provided all kind of lessons. It was—it provided child care once my baby was born. That was another important thing, because I might have had to go about to get a job, to keep the baby in a nursery. But they provided a nursery there, and, throughout my pregnancy, they had—they had teachers that were able to tell you what to expect, and they also had the other traditional lessons at school, math and—

Senator CHILES. So you found through that a way you could stay in school and why it was important for you to stay in school?

Mrs. HUDSON. Right. I had to stay in school mainly because of my baby. I wanted to stay in school so I could, after he was born—

Senator CHILES. You are satisfied you made the right choice?

Mrs. HUDSON. Right. Absolutely.

Senator CHILES. That's great. Thank you.

Miss MUSSELWHITE. I dropped out because of boredom. School just didn't hold my attention.

Senator CHILES. You need to pull that microphone up a little bit. It is hard for me to hear you.

Miss MUSSELWHITE. I had real bad family problems; and, because of family problems, I didn't have enough clothes to wear to school. So I figured, why go to school if I didn't have no clothes to wear.

And school didn't hold my interest, so I just told the dean of girls that I was going to quit, and so I did.

Senator CHILES. Are you in school now?

Miss MUSSELWHITE. Yes.

Senator CHILES. How did you get encouraged to come back?

Miss MUSSELWHITE. Well, I was out of school. I was out of school for almost 1 year. And, over the summer, it was in the paper, something about the vocational skills and all this.

So I called the number, and they sent me this envelope with a bunch of stuff in it, and I filled all the papers out.

I went and took an assessment test and started and went to the Southside Skill Center. And I take health occupation. And, so far, I love it. It holds my interest. It's something that I like to do, because I will be working with people.

Senator CHILES. You are glad when you wake up in the morning now?

Miss MUSSELWHITE. Yes, sir; I am ready to go.

Senator CHILES. That's great. You didn't just make up your mind like that to drop out. During that time that you were bored and that you were having your family problems, did you discuss that with anybody around the school or someone that you could talk to about that? Did you know there was any help out there that was available, or did anybody try to talk you into it?

Miss MUSSELWHITE. Well, several people tried to talk me out of quitting. They said, "It's stupid. Don't quit."

Senator CHILES. Were they students or—

Miss MUSSELWHITE. They were family and friends. And my mind was already made up by the time they got to me.

Senator CHILES. You weren't in a listening mode then?

Miss MUSSELWHITE. Right.

Senator CHILES. All Right. Yes, sir.

Mr. HARRIS. Bored.

Senator CHILES. Good morning.

Mr. HARRIS. Bored.

Senator CHILES. Bored? Talk right into that mike.

Mr. HARRIS. When I got, seemed like wasn't learning nothing, wasn't learning me nothing; nobody, nobody else. And I was with the wrong people. And I used to didn't go to school. I thought I wasn't learning nothing, so I stopped going.

About 1 week after that, I went to the skill center, Northside Skill Center. I went there for about 1 year, got me a job. There, they sit you down by yourself and talk to you. Miss Williams and Miss Brooks, they sit down and talk to you, tell you everything.

Senator CHILES. You had someone who paid attention to you than?

Mr. HARRIS. Yes, sir; paid lots of attention to you. I liked it over there.

Senator CHILES. Do you feel like what you are doing now is meaningful to you and is going to help you in the future, is going to mean something to you?

Mr. HARRIS. Yes, sir.

Senator CHILES. How long were you out of school?

Mr. HARRIS. About 1 week.

Senator CHILES. Only about 1 week. That's good. All right.

Mr. WILLIAMSON. I never dropped out of school. I wanted to, and that's why I got into the prevention program. I felt, this way, I could get on a work program and get out of school at 11 o'clock and go to work.

That's why I was thinking about quitting, because my friends were out. They were working. They had cars. They had money. They wasn't in school. They didn't have to get up early. So that's why I got into this. That way, go to the skill center, take a trade, then you get a job in the trade. They let you out of school at 11 o'clock and you go to work.

And you go to school from 7:40 to 11 a.m.; and, from 11 a.m. to whatever your hours are, go to work.

Senator CHILES. So you felt like it looked more attractive to be out of school than to be in school, it looked like the kids out there were doing better or had cars or something?

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Yes, sir; you know, because they wasn't having to listen to a teacher. They didn't get in trouble for wearing the wrong kind of shirt, chewing gum, and stuff like that.

Senator CHILES. Now, the program you are in now you think works for you?

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Yes; because I can go to school and learn and I can work and make money at the same time.

Senator CHILES. Now, do you see, in the work that you are in now, the future, that you need to continue that education to even do better in the work that you are in?

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Yes, sir.

Senator CHILES. How long will it take you now? Will it take you a little longer or will you get out about the same time? Or how will that work?

Mr. WILLIAMSON. We'll graduate. We'll walk with the class of 1988.

Senator CHILES. You will. Good. So you will get your diploma and, at the same time, you will get the job experience, too.

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Yes, sir.

Senator CHILES. That's good. How did you find out about this program? Because you said you got into a Dropout Prevention Program. How did you find out about that?

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Well, I had a counselor, and she recommended me to Miss Hall, who's sitting there, and she told me all about it. And then I just got into it. I liked the way it sounded.

Senator CHILES. So there was somebody out there when you were ready to quit that you could go to, felt like you could talk to, and could help you?

Mr. WILLIAMSON. Yes sir.

Senator CHILES. That's great. That is one of the things we know we have got to have here, where sometimes people don't know that there's anybody out there, you know, that cares, that they can talk to.

Mr. BROWN. I'm somewhat like my buddy, Tommy. I haven't dropped out, but it crossed my mind a couple times. Only reason I haven't dropped out, because I'm in this program called Prevention Dropout Program, and I was introduced by Mr. Smith and Miss Hall. They sat down and talked to me, and I liked the way it sounded.

And my parents didn't want me to drop out.

Senator CHILES. Your parents didn't want you to drop out?

Mr. BROWN. My parents didn't want me to drop out.

Senator CHILES. That was important to you, wasn't it?

Mr. BROWN. I knew that my education and the education that I would need later in life would be better than dropping out. You don't have an education. Once you get an education—and peer pressure from friends.

And I have friends that have dropped out and have good jobs. Some have very good jobs. Some have nothing.

Senator CHILES. Some don't have jobs?

Mr. BROWN. Some don't have jobs at all. But some try to get back in school. In fact, I tell them, you know, I told them about the program, and they tell me they like the way it sounds, but they never go for it.

You go tell them, you know, you can try to do so much for somebody; if they don't try to help themselves, you can't do nothing.

I'm a senior at Sandalwood now. This is my last year. And I'm in the Prevention Dropout Program, and I like it. And it's doing me lots of good.

Senator CHILES. So what you are telling me, it is a lot tougher to get someone back into school once he's gone than it is to try to show them that there are some alternatives or that there are some other ways before they leave?

Mr. BROWN. Uh-huh. I think it'd be much harder if they drop out for, you know, like a year or two and then go back. I don't think they'd have any more interest then, like graduating when you finish school, if you plan on going to college, you know, you should go then, not wait, because you might not want to go if you wait too long.

Senator CHILES. Is there any network or is there a program where you feel like you can sit down with a student you know who may feel like he is getting ready to leave—have they ever asked you or did you ever feel like there was some way of giving any help, having been through it? Does that ever happen?

Miss CANFIELD. Can you explain that a little further, sir?

Senator CHILES. Pardon?

Miss CANFIELD. Could you explain that just a little further sir?

Senator CHILES. Yes.

Miss CANFIELD. I didn't understand what you said.

Senator CHILES. I am saying, is there any way that you think that y'all can function sort of as a network or an advisory group, to try to help you and people who might be facing some of the same things that y'all were facing?

Miss CANFIELD. I guess I could, because there's some that's returned to school that has quit. I returned to Terry Parker to graduate this year.

Senator CHILES. Great.

Miss CANFIELD. And I—

Senator CHILES. And some might think, "I'd be embarrassed to go back. They'd make fun of me, or I wouldn't feel comfortable," you know, there could be a lot of reasons that you know are not that real now but they might feel that way.

Miss CANFIELD. Well, a lot of them are true. Your friends do kind of laugh in your face. But, you know, you tend to ignore it, because of the fact that you made the right decision, and you're gonna graduate and make something of your life and everything.

But I think I could help someone, honestly, you know, to get back on the right track, because I did it. It took me a while, but I did it with the help of Miss Bell and my counselor at Terry Parker and my parents.

Senator CHILES. Great. Any of the rest of you, or anybody, have you ever had that opportunity, or has that happened? It seems to me that you all are a valuable resource to be used in a way, because of the fact that you have sort of gone through it, you know what they are thinking about, you know what is going on in their minds, and you had made a decision like they did, that you dropped out for a while and you came back. Again, that has to be valuable, that you could be called on.

Well, you all are helpful to me because anything you say kind of helps us, makes me understand more and more that there is no single issue. It could be boredom, it could be that you want to feel like you are starting to learn something and getting into your career, that it is a number of different reasons; but it is also interesting that, where there was some counseling and help that you knew about, it seemed to be able to give you an alternative, to be able to provide something, that there was some other way, it wasn't a yes or no, quit or stay, that there could be something that could provide that alternative, so that is helpful, too, and I thank y'all very much for your testimony, and it was helpful. And I congratulate you all in the choices that you have made. I think you are all on a good path.

Our next panel will be "The Community—The Impact of the Dropout Problem." Jack Levine, the executive director for the Center for Children and Youth will be with us.

Mr. Levine is one of Florida's leading advocates of positive programs for dropout prevention. He was appointed by Governor Graham in 1984 to the alternative education task force, and that task force ex-

amined the impact of alternative education and dropout prevention, and he is going to be discussing the impact of the dropout problem on social service.

Sheriff McMillan will join us for that panel, too, and he has developed and implemented, with the sheriff's office, a unique and innovative program to deal with juvenile offenders, many of whom are high school dropouts.

The Serious Habitual Offender/Drug Involved Program has been piloted in some three different areas. He is going to be telling us about his findings in dealing with dropouts and the impact that this group has on law enforcement.

And Mr. William Harrell, who is the president of Coastal Construction Products, and has been involved with the Duval Public Education Foundation, a nonprofit organization, whose purpose is to work with the public school system to improve education services, and part of the focus of that organization is dropout prevention. Mr. Harrell is going to be speaking about the impact of the dropout problem on small business.

Jack, we will start with you, and we are delighted to see you here today.

STATEMENT OF JACK LEVINE, DIRECTOR, FLORIDA CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mr. LEVINE. Thank you, Senator Chiles. I am the director of the Florida Center for Children and Youth, which is a statewide membership-supported advocacy group.

We operate with no State funding. And my academic background, just briefly, is in English literature and infant development, which explains why I am known as a grammatically correct babler.

I have been asked to address the impact of Florida's school failure rate and school dropout problem on the child welfare system, and I will say that all my points can be statistically verified by Commissioner Castor's staff and the Department of HRS and the committees of the legislature, but I am a little bit shy about statistics usually.

Let's just say that my dad's traditional statement about statisticians is correct, that, if you put one leg in a broiling-hot oven and the other in a deep freeze, you can say that on the average it is very comfortable.

I will say that on the average Florida's children are not in very good shape. Every major indicator of child health, well-being, and educational success puts Florida in the bottom five to seven States.

And, as you know Senator, a child born in Jefferson County, FL, basically in the shadow of the State capitol, is less likely to live to blow out her first birthday candle than children in all 50 States and 26 foreign nations.

Twenty-four percent of Florida's children live in poverty; and, if we look at the age under six, it is one-third.

Child poverty, of course, nationally, has increased 35 percent, and I believe that cuts in maternal and child health care programs which were

passed by the Congress in 1981 are now being felt and entering kindergarten classrooms. We have a phrase for that, and we do believe that cuts to children never heal.

The Florida Legislature is known for its chronic disregard for human service funding. The U.S. Bureau of the Census has taught us that we are 50th among all of the States in how much we put in our budget as a State for the needs of our people, less than the traditionally thought of poor States; Mississippi, Arkansas, Kentucky, to name just a few.

As a result, we have enormous waiting lists in every major program affecting children, including health, including child care, including drug prevention.

And, in the midst of this budget neglect that we have identified comes the shining light of public education. Unfortunately, as Senator Castor (sic) has related, this is, in some cases, a dim light, too.

One-third of our children will never graduate. I believe that that failure rate is because we are not putting our children into kindergarten school-ready. The tragedy of day-care waiting lists is, of course, not just the potential of child abuse and neglect, it is the missed opportunity for that love of learning, especially for economically disadvantaged children; and, of course, we are paying dearly.

In the last school year that data was available, over 130,000 Florida students were not promoted to the next highest grade. If we budget that out at \$3,000 per student, we, in essence, paid \$340 million in Florida last year for repeat grades.

If we look at just the kindergarten and first grade compilation alone, we had 27,000 nonpromotions. If you cost out that kindergarten and first grade failure rate, we are talking about \$80 million.

It is kind of like Disney World. If you go on Monday and you liked it so well, you have got to pay a new admission for Tuesday. Well, we have got to pay again for the second year.

The question we ask is not that that is an educationally unsound decision, it is. The point is, do we have that \$80 million in kindergarten and first grade dropout prevention programs? And the answer to that is no.

Senator Castor's leadership has given us a pre-K program, but the appropriation last year was only \$1.6 million, which is less than 2 percent of what we paid for those repeat grades at kindergarten and first grade.

School suspension, more than 119,000 students were suspended; on the average, two suspensions per student; on the average, 3 days per suspension. That calculates out to 750,000 days lost to suspension last year to Florida. One more calculator punch and we find 5,250,000 hours lost in this State to school suspensions.

Now, that is enforced idleness of our most misbehaving young people. The stresses on law enforcement, the stresses on HRS, the stresses on the drug program can easily be measured. I think that is writing a script for tragedy.

Just a word on corporal punishment. I don't believe that corporal punishment will be in the Federal purview in the next decade, but let me just mention that Florida—

Senator CHILES. You usually speak about this, Jack.

Mr. LEVINE. To me, it is really a badge of shame, how we can lean children over desks and have a publicly paid employee strike children with boards measuring 2 to 3 feet, some will say that it is less than 2. I think there is no more humiliating fact than that is how we communicated with our children.

The irony, of course, is that we only know of one of five cases of child abuse. So the children who misbehave most may be because of severe punishment at home, are dealt with by State employees in the same way, or district employees. I think our logic has to be turned around.

Teen pregnancy is an issue that we have all been kind of hovering around but few are really directing their attention to it, as it should be, because I think we are ashamed of teen pregnancy.

We know that there are 38,000 pregnancies every year under 18, which is over 100 a day. We know that about 40 percent will be carried to term, and we know that only 20 of 67 school districts have programs for these young mothers and pregnant teens.

There is no better point of intervention than after the first birth. A young mother who is not in school will more likely be pregnant—55 percent will be pregnant—if she is not in school. If she is in school, less than 5 percent will be pregnant again within 2 years. That is the real opportunity.

Our tradition of underfunding has come home to roost year after year. I did have four recommendations for Federal initiatives that I think would be well timed, especially where we are right now in Florida.

Briefly: Head Start, we know only one of five eligible children in Florida is receiving service, and we know that \$1 in saves \$7 within the school life of that child.

Second is availability of health services for at-risk students; combatting drug abuse, combatting venereal disease. One of three reported cases of venereal disease in Florida is under age 20.

And of course, combatting unplanned pregnancy. Now, this is very controversial, the idea of either school-based or school-accessible clinics is extremely controversial. We believe that unwanted pregnancy is controversial. That one-third of the venereal disease rate is very controversial.

And, of course, the epidemic of drug use is very controversial. We can't put our heads in the sand on the teen pregnancy and teen sexuality issue.

Third, I recommend the replication of the Missouri program called parents as first teachers. This is a program that teaches birth parents, teaches young parents both child development and activities training, helping that newborn and that young infant to reach developmental scales that can improve their kindergarten readiness.

It is a program that is about 2 years old in the State of Missouri, and I believe the preliminary findings show excellent response rates across the spectrum of socioeconomic conditions.

And third, an increase, always increase, of delinquency prevention and juvenile justice funding. What we have here in Florida is, the only time for some of our teenagers that money kicks in is after they are arrested.

It costs \$16,500 for Sheriff McMillan and his colleagues to house a child in his jail. Tonight in Florida, 1,000 under 18 are sleeping in prison, and another 380 under 18 are sleeping in jail; \$16,500 a year, more than tuition at Harvard, at Emory, and the University of Miami.

I believe we can do better than that. Your leadership has been outstanding. Senator, keep up the good work.

Senator CHILES. Thank you. Sheriff, we will now turn to you.

STATEMENT OF JIM McMILLAN, SHERIFF, DUVAL COUNTY

Mr. McMILLAN. Thank you, Senator. I appreciate very much your having me up here before the subcommittee to testify today.

I am not sure whether all of the subcommittee members are aware of some of the innovative and accelerated steps that the sheriff's office in Duval County has taken in the area of juvenile justice, but one thing I think has proved to be extremely clear in those efforts, and that is the contribution that the school system has made. It has been invaluable.

Naturally, we in law enforcement have a strong interest in the well-being of the schools' operation, and I am certainly willing to offer any assistance that I can provide in this hearing or elsewhere to see if we can contribute toward solving the problem.

We have been into a program for approximately 3 years in Duval County in the sheriff's office called SHO/DI, S H O / D I. It is an acronym for serious habitual offender/drug involved. It is a juvenile program.

It began as a Federal-grant project with the Department of Justice. Jacksonville and a couple of other cities in the Nation were awarded these grants. Very recently, a national network TV station aired a program dealing with juvenile crime in which this program was spotlighted, and it really is an eye-opener program, and I hope that some of you here have had an opportunity to see that. Tom Brokaw was the narrator.

Here in Jacksonville at the sheriff's office, working close in hand with the school system, HRS, and with the State attorney, we have established an elaborate program to identify, to track, and detain the serious juvenile offenders.

Our agency has been designated as a national demonstration site for this pilot program, at the initiation of, as I said, the Justice Department.

Of course, this honor has been the result of a tremendous amount of hard work and noteworthy breakthroughs in the area of juvenile justice policy and program development.

Our SHO/DI files currently list about 80 juveniles who we feel are responsible for some 40 percent of the serious juvenile crime in this community, and I am not talking about, when I say serious habitual offenders, hubcap stealing, or petty larceny. I am talking about serious felonies.

We have on our SHO/DI list now some 83 juveniles who have been responsible for at least—because we don't know how many other crimes they have committed and gotten away with it—but at least 1,156 felony crimes ranging from 3 murders to 19 rapes to 119 armed robberies and assaults. Those sorts of felonies are what I am talking about.

And they are responsible, some 6 percent of our juveniles are responsible for 40 percent of the serious juvenile crime.

So, if we target those few individuals who are giving all of our kids a bad name, we are going to have more success.

Since the SHO/DI Program's inception in late 1983, our juvenile agents have tracked and monitored the case profiles of approximately 220 of these returning juvenile perpetrators.

As they reach their 18th birthday, they graduate—this is one area they don't drop out; I wish they would—they graduate into the criminal justice system, to the adult criminal justice system, and become our problems in our adult prisons. And the list is produced in that manner.

As a result of our close working relationship with the Duval County school system, we have been able to secure the data that I think you have requested, at least in one area of your attempt to solve this problem.

As I mentioned, we have an integrated network system with inter-agency cooperation which permits information sharing between all component groups.

Thus, of the current 80 SHO/DI's that we have on our list, 68, or 85 percent, have dropped out of school. The balance, 12, or 15 percent, are enrolled in school. Of those meeting the criteria for potential SHO/DI's, those who are showing trends of becoming the serious problems, which is a current total of 115 juveniles, 62 or 53 percent, have dropped out of school.

The remaining juveniles on the list, 53, or 47 percent, remain enrolled in our school system.

The juveniles that comprise our SHO/DI list have a much worse track record in regard to dropout rates than the local or national averages.

In the academic years of 1979-80 and 1985-86, inclusive, 4.4 percent of all students dropped out each year in Duval County. That trend seemed to reverse itself somewhat in the past school year, despite some stricter requirements for graduation.

Last year, around the Nation, 612,000 students dropped out of school, which averaged about 3,400 per class a day.

I certainly support your belief that the school dropout incident is a crucial social problem that needs addressing.

The cost of these young men and women to our society of failing to complete 12 years of primary and secondary education is devastating. Additional data from last year indicates that the lifetime wage earnings of a high school graduate are \$450,000 more than the lifetime earnings for a dropout.

I certainly think that the young people who appeared here today should take that into consideration when they are thinking about dropping out of school.

Now, that is alarming when one realizes that that figure is just shy of \$500,000 in the income-earning potential.

Also, it is believed that close to three-quarters of all prison inmates never completed high school.

So, in conclusion, I hope that you can see why we feel that our SHO/DI kids are of great concern to our agency, and we worry about them, and we devote a significant number of resources to identifying and tracking the youthful offenders.

As I said earlier, these SHO/DI's have an 85-percent dropout rate, and thus have a tremendous amount of free or idle time. And since they are not occupied by the demands and activities of school, this provides them more opportunity to engage in criminal behavior that results in their contact with law enforcement authorities.

And, of course, we know the problems that result from that and the tremendous cost that is involved in dealing with these kids.

I commend your efforts in fact-finding and endeavoring to find some solutions to the problems of school dropouts.

As a society, I think we need to resolve this problem and come up with an answer to make education more interesting, more challenging to these children. And I think their personal future is gravely affected, along with the well-being of our community and our very Nation. Thank you for having me.

Senator CHILES. Thank you very much. Now we will hear from Mr. William Harrell, with Coastal Construction Products. Sir, you have been involved in the Duval Public Education Foundation, and we want to hear about your work.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM HARRELL, COASTAL CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS

Mr. HARRELL. Thank you, Senator. It is a privilege to be here. We certainly appreciate the time that you and your staff, Commissioner Castor and the others are sharing from your busy schedules and times, which reflects the importance that you place on this very serious national problem.

It is particularly fitting, I think, that we have this meeting at Sandalwood, where you have got a national model school. And hanging overhead is a banner. I think you can say it either way: "Finishers are Winners" or "Winners are Finishers." It certainly addressed this problem.

The students who preceded us, in every instance I noted, made reference to individual teachers and individual staff personnel who had had significant impact on them making their decision to stay in school.

The message I got out of the group of that program, which I hope is taken back to Washington and Tallahassee, is the key to success is going to be individuals participating with individual children.

The remarks that I wanted to make relate to the fact, from a business point of view, obviously our economy in some manner is going to be in balance with supply and demand, with consumers and suppliers, and these children who leave the education system undereducated are going to be consumers not suppliers.

We have heard much testimony so far about the imbalance that that creates and the excessive expenses that it requires for our Government to fund their needs.

From the beginning of our country, taxes have been levied against the citizens at their initiative, who elected officials, such as yourself, to provide the security of the country, fairness and justice in our economic and judicial systems, and one of those major fairness issues was that there should be education for all children, and that it should be, and I will put it in quotes, free.

Obviously, it is not free. It is provided at no cost to the present user. The good intentions of those people who provided those tax funds, the ability to provide the education, is all too frequently not matched with the good judgment of the youth that is getting the benefit of that program, of that education opportunity.

Thus, we have the dropout problem. From the business point of view, there are two problems associated with that. One, we have pre-paid for nonutilized services; the buildings, the salaries, and the people that are in those buildings. We could figure out how to put one or two more children in those classrooms if they would just stay there.

Second, we obviously are going to pay taxes for the future expansion of Government services and Sheriff McMillan's judicial requirements, and, again, these are paid for by people who stayed in school and graduated and became earners.

The dropouts are going to prove that the undereducated is going to very likely be the economically disadvantaged.

We need to do things which will eliminate the problems in the community of the excess cost and the relatively low quality of life that those dropouts were likely to have in our society.

There are 10 programs, or 10 points, that I feel ought to be part of addressing the solution of this problem.

The first thing is the definition. We can come up with any number we want, there is a definition to fit it. In Florida, we define dropouts as those that leave the school system while they are in the school system's control, what I call the September to June period.

In fact, there are dropouts who never come back and register for school. So one thing that will put order into the chaos is a proper definition.

My personal opinion is that that definition ought to be: a teenager not in school, regardless of when the teenager got out of school.

Businesses could easily, and with minimal inconvenience, be required to report to each school district the names and backgrounds on teenagers that are gainfully employed full time when they otherwise would normally be in school. That person is a dropout.

Second, we can rely on the professionals that we have in the teaching world to identify the at-risk profiles, and I would suggest that the school administrators should have the authority and the responsibility to be able to administer a tax incentive educational program, which I am going to address in a moment. It is important that they have the authority as well as the responsibility.

Third, that those children who need to drop out especially for economic reasons, assistance to their family, these dropouts should, if they agree to stay in school, should be given opportunity for employment in businesses, and the businesses should be given a tax incentive of 100 percent of the pay to those students, those student employees, that exceeds the minimum wage.

Give the business the automatic incentive to pay the child more so that the student can earn enough money while they are working that they could remain in school.

But let's modify that 100 percent authorization and say that it shall, in fact, be a percentage somewhere between zero and 100 percent, depending upon the school system's evaluation of that student's grade, their attendance at that school, and their attitude while they are in attendance at school.

We could also extend that same tax benefit to the sub or to the teenager, that that taxable income will be at a much reduced tax rate for a teenager, giving a business incentive to pay them more, giving the children incentives to stay in school, gain access to that tax benefit.

We should have large penalties for abuse, for the school system reimbursing the total cost in the event there is abuse of the grade, attendance, and attitude ratings; for businesses, 5 to 10 times the penalty for failing to comply with the next point in the program, which is a guaranteed job after graduation for a minimum of 1 year at equal to or greater than the salary they were originally at.

And those children in that program would lose the tax benefit, as would the business, which would result in a deterrent to the tax system through the taxes paid or the tax benefits lost by the business and taxes paid by the child, for a very high percentage of the cost of that 3 or 4 year effort to keep the child in school.

These benefits should be scaled to accommodate vocational children who are not dropout candidates but who choose to go into vocational programs, so that their employers should have a percentage of their salaries also tax deductible, and those same children ought to have a percentage of their taxable income getting the same benefits as the at-risk student. Let's not punish the diligent.

Second, the problem is well known. I don't want to criticize, I want to compliment your efforts to take this much of your time to focus the degree of the problem, but it is well known: in the educational com-

munity, it is well known in the Government community, and it is well known in the business community.

Let's get on and do something about it as opposed to studies. The incentive programs, finally, should be proportionate to results. We ought to have—businesses ought to have the opportunity for these tax benefits, but these children need an individual who can pay some attention to their efforts.

This was particularly pointed out in the comments of the individual teachers that they recognized for keeping them in school.

Make the businesses have a tax benefit subject to the accomplishments of their education and graduation of those children.

And, if we try and fail, that is just like any other business, you don't get the profit if you don't produce the results. Thank you, sir, for the opportunity.

Senator CHILES. Thank you for your testimony and your interesting proposal.

Jack, you served on the Florida alternative education task force several years ago. What kind of alternative education policies have you found to be most effective in dealing with the dropout issue?

Mr. LEVINE. Senator, we found, foremost, were the programs that were what we call school of choice. These are schools that are available to the child and their parents, knowledge of available alternatives as opposed to what we call administrative placements, which are basically alternatives that say, "This is your alternative or out you go."

We think that the positive schools of choice and the outstanding example of that that I am exposed to is the SIAL School, School for Individual Applied Learning, which is in Tallahassee. It is such an example.

We have such large classroom sites, we have such large school facilities, that there are going to be portions of children who simply don't want to or can't fit in, and for that to be known early enough so that the child can be positively directed is a way to go.

The other, and it is a reemphasis, is the fact that we are losing so many young women because of pregnancy and motherhood to education. Those school programs—and there is one here in Duval County and 19 other counties—are the best alternative to a life of poverty for both mother and child.

And yet, in some counties, we have just single sites. I can't imagine a young woman, 7, 8 months pregnant, getting on a bus for 2½ hours in one direction or the other, to attend school. It is not happening.

So those would be the two I would focus on: schools of choice and better services for our teen mothers.

Senator CHILES. How can we encourage the other counties to set up programs in that regard?

Mr. LEVINE. Well, I think encouragement can come with incentives. I think that there have been ideas for making either school suspensions or dropouts an economic disincentive.

For example, I don't have the research, but there is talk around that schools infrequently suspend students during the FTE week, and that, if we do a kind of backtrack, we can basically show how many seats have been paid for that the services have not been delivered.

But I don't believe that we should establish, for example, in the corporal punishment, a whack tax. I don't think that an administrator should have to pay, maybe \$5 a hit—well, maybe I do believe in that.

Let me just say that I think positive incentives, positive incentives so that—

Senator CHILES. My parents would have gladly paid that tax. [Laughter.]

Mr. LEVINE. Well, I will tell you, there is some talk in Duval County about it. Let me just say that positive incentives through fiscal awards—frankly, I think our testimony is showing that the way to do it is to make it appealing to keep children in school, and I think that this board will work along that line.

Senator CHILES. Sheriff, I was very interested in your program of SHO/DI, and I understand what a valuable tool it is, because it proves out what we often talk about, is dropouts that are going to be a problem, and certainly it proves that so much.

What efforts now are made to try to deal with those at high risk and try to bring them away from that and bring them back into school or back into society?

Mr. McMILLAN. That is really the efforts that needs to be made now, Senator. I think the weak link in the SHO/DI Program so far has been that we have identified that we need to do more in that area.

Senator CHILES. Yes.

Mr. McMILLAN. For instance, of the SHO/DI's that we identified, do a good job of doing that, that we apprehend and get off the streets, typically they are sentenced to 1 year in one of the State institutions, and there are fewer of those institutions of programs to deal with these kids now than there used to be, and keep in mind, once they reach the SHO/DI list, they are pretty serious, hardcore youthful offenders.

Senator CHILES. You have convinced me of that.

Mr. McMILLAN. Typically, they will be sentenced to that year; but, in reality, that means that they are going to be going for about 3 to 4 months, and most of these kids can play games for about 3 or 4 months, and then they are back on the street, and the sad fact is that we have a 100-percent rearrest rate of all the SHO/DI's we got off the street within 90 days after getting back on the street.

So that certainly spotlights the need, I think, for some programs. And I think programs to deal with those serious juvenile offenders are going to have to be programs similar to the Outward Bound Program, or bootcamp-type program, that would take these youthful offenders and teach them some discipline and hopefully turn them around and make good citizens out of them, but at least keep them out of our community, wreaking the kind of havoc that they have been doing for a period of time.

I think the hope for the future, though, lies in the fact we are not just identifying those kids that are on the SHO/DI list but also those potential SHO/DI's, the kids that are beginning to show that pattern, and there is where we really need to deal, I think, with those kids, and have the best chance of keeping them in school or turning them around. And I think the real benefit that we have in dealing with that now that we didn't have is the cooperation, the interaction among the various agencies in sharing information.

Before the SHO/DI Program, the school would have a record on a kid, and they would know about it, and HRS would have a record on the same kid, and the police would have a record on the same kid, but nobody was sharing that information, and nobody really had a true picture of what was happening in this young man's or woman's life, and, for that matter, what the true picture was in juvenile crime in our county.

Now, through the sharing of that information, I think we are able to target and pick up potential SHO/DI's much earlier, and that is where we need to intercede, I think, with the programs.

Senator CHILES. Sounds like to me that there is room for big payoffs, certainly with the potential, if not the ones that are already on the list, when we know per year what it costs us to incarcerate these people, and that these are going to be graduates, as you said, to the hardened criminal core as they become over 18, that would certainly be dollars very, very well spent, again, in that regard.

Is there a role, Mr. Harrell, for State and local taxing authorities in easing the burden? You talked about tax credits, but it sounded like to me most of that would be Federal that you were talking about. Do you see a role for the State and local authorities?

Mr. HARRELL. Senator, I think that we have teachers in our school system that certainly aren't in there for the money, they are in there for the love of what they do, and they are professionals.

We have got people who know how to handle this problem—they are dedicated to handling this problem—that are successful with it when they are given the proper resources and the proper options.

And this tax credit idea that I am suggesting, to me, is one that is simple. It is one that will get paid back very promptly. It is one that—I don't know if it is legal, but it certainly is a major part of my thrust—that these people who are the professionals, the teachers, would have, as I said, the authority and the responsibility to deal with it.

In our State and local programs, I don't—I suppose you could take the same thing and take our ad valorem taxes or take our sale tax and say, "OK, we could claim a credit against those types of taxes." It would be a little more difficult to administer, in my opinion.

Senator CHILES. Well, we do have a corporate income tax.

Mr. HARRELL. We have got a sales tax we might be able to change, too. But the total dollars that we spend on the corporate income tax are quite small relative to the total dollars we spend on Federal corporate income tax.

So I think that the impact would be greater, and, to me, the simplicity of it makes the Federal the easier way to do it, sir.

Senator CHILES. Well, your comments strongly suggest that you are feeling that the economic decisions weigh heavily in the minds of the dropouts.

Evidence tells us, though, over a long period of time they are going to earn a lot less, potentially, and yet they seem to think that they have to drop out for economic reasons, or that seems to be the gist of the comments.

Do you think that the community at large is doing an adequate job of informing students, you know, what the true facts are, what the ultimate facts would be if they don't pursue that education?

Mr. HARRELL. I think, yes, at least in Duval County. The rotary clubs of Duval County—and I think we can probably enlist some of the other service clubs—have taken on the project of trying to get a one-on-one relationship with every one of these children that the school system locally has identified.

So the ability to communicate with the professionals that we have in our staffs, the volunteer effort that we have through the PTA's, the business service clubs, the means of getting that word out is there.

And the concept that I am proposing is one to make the message so loud and so clear that the dropout literally, quote, cannot afford to drop out, make it so punitively tough on them financially in their current mode of thinking.

It is hard to talk to those kids about what is 10 years down the road. They can see tomorrow. These children that we had were today, they were the wise ones that saw tomorrow today. And we need to get to those others that just can't see that far, and we need to talk to them about dollars today.

Senator CHILES. Well, we thank you again, each of you, for your testimony. It has been very helpful. We appreciate it.

STATEMENT OF HERB SANG, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Senator CHILES. Now we are going to hear from our school superintendent. Superintendent Sang has made dropout prevention a top priority in Duval County. He has implemented the countywide program for dropout prevention known as "Winners are Finishers."

He is going to discuss the nature of the problem in Duval County and some of the elements of a successful program. We are delighted to have you, Superintendent.

Mr. SANG. Thank you.

Senator CHILES. We are happy to be in your county.

Mr. SANG. We are pleased to have you. Probably there is no other subject being discussed nationwide today than this problem that you are addressing.

Even though we feel that probably we have better results than the majority of the American districts, tricks, it is a major problem here also. In fact, when we look and see that here in America where, like no

other country, we provide an opportunity for all children no matter what their problem might be, to get a free education.

There is a large number that, for different reasons, that don't take advantage of it. Here in our district, as was stated a little earlier, the State of Florida today considers dropouts as being those who start school in the fall and the ones who are not there when school is out in the spring.

We run approximately 2,100 students in that category. That is about 4.7 percent of our students. But we lose another 1,200 students during the summer, that we call the no-shows, that just don't come back.

We have implemented many programs. We have in excess of 20. We have seven that have been very successful for us.

The most successful program we have had is called Competency Development Program. This particular program, we have approximately 8,250 secondary students enrolled in it. They do not receive a regular diploma because we do not reduce our standards, but they receive a diploma of competency, of which they become competent in the areas in which they have special interest or ones in which they can become competent.

Youngsters have to be successful. We know that the major problem we face with students is one of attitude, because attitude is really the essence of learning, and their attitude toward the school, their attitude toward their teachers, and then we find their attitude toward themselves.

In fact, the lack of self-esteem is the major problem that we find in dropouts. They just don't have the confidence.

They think a lot of themselves; if you ask them, they will say they do. But, when you get down and really touch them, talk with them, their bottom line is, "Nobody cares," and that, "I'm just no one, no one recognizes me."

Another program that we have that has been very successful is a full-time vocational program. This one we were able to put together with the junior college and private agencies through funds from the Federal Government.

Many are critical of Federal Government funds, but we can show results. We have been recognized that this program is one of the 10 top successful programs in the country. That is where students between the ages of 16 to 20 can come back, they don't get a diploma because they don't meet our standards, but they learn a craft or a skill; and, in addition, we work with them on their basic language arts and with their mathematics.

This has been very successful. We feel that many of these individuals that we are able to attract, many of them are already on the street, and they come back into this program, they go to the skill center full time. They are not as confined as you would be in the formal educational setting, where there is one class, and then go to the other, which many of these students can't handle. Many of these students fall into the SHO/DI area that the sheriff was talking about earlier.

Another program that has been very successful for us, and I think it proves out when you look at what is the typical youngster that drops out of school in Duval County as compared to around the country. This is what we call the Young Parents Program.

We process about 280 girls a year through this special program. They are girls who are having babies out of wedlock. This not only presents a problem to the girl herself, we find that these teenagers who don't get proper care, when they deliver babies they are going to become a liability to society, because so many times the youngsters that become special education children in the future are handicapped, are born to these teenage mothers that don't receive proper care.

So we have an agreement with the hospital here where they provide prenatal care in cooperation with our program. It is on a voluntary basis. The girls go to this particular school. We teach them home, how to care for the baby, in addition to taking their regular subjects.

The program that, again, from the Federal funding, has been a tremendous benefit. We have a nursery. We find that many of these young girls, once they have the baby, we felt that they would come back to school, but they didn't have a place, didn't have anyone to take care of their baby.

So they had that problem, and they had to stay home and take care of their child. So, in this nursery, they can bring the child to the nursery, and we care for the youngster in the nursery while the mother goes to school. This has been a tremendous success.

If you had time where you could come by and look in on this nursery, I am sure you would be extremely impressed, because these youngsters, so many of them would never have this opportunity at home. They don't have the same type of facility to care for them, to look at them and see what kind of medical problems the child might have, which becomes again a liability on society in taking care of it.

We cannot stop. We have to continue to move to try to reduce the number of dropouts. Even though we reduced it this past year by one-hundredth of 1 percent, at least we are going in the right direction. It just isn't enough.

It is a community effort. It takes the entire community to be involved. We are fortunate here that this community has been involved, when we say education is a family affair, and the family in Jacksonville is actually the entire community, where businessmen and women do get involved.

Our most recent project, as was mentioned a little earlier, we call it the rotary challenge. We took and we asked five of the largest chapters of rotary here if they would take one high school, which they have.

So they are in competition, and this spring we will identify the rotary and the school that has reduced the number of dropouts by the highest percent. What will they do? They will be matched up. We know it works, because we have done it before where all other things fail.

A businessman will go and talk with an individual, and not be the big brother that would—you have seen this type of program, which is

good. We are not asking them to go out and entertain them, take them to movies or buy them meals, because, you know, some of these kids get to expecting that. That is the problem.

We need to do things the old-fashioned way. As they say, "You gotta earn it." Too many of these youngsters haven't earned it. They don't know how to do that. In fact, they never finish anything, and that is why this year we have our theme that winners are finishers. They have got to learn to finish.

But what they talk with them about, they talk about the things you heard here today, about what the opportunities are if you get an education, the fact you can't even get in the Army now unless you have a high school education or its equivalency.

Who ever dreamed you couldn't get into the Army? What kind of a citizen are you that you can't get in the Army because you don't have an education, so how do you expect us to hire you?

And we have found, because we identified interests, that some of the businessmen, and we expect, some of the rotary men and leaders in this community to actually employ some of these youngsters on a part-time basis. That part we do ask them to do.

Rotary says "Service Above Self." We say, "We are not asking for your money. Business people come to you who want your money. We just want your service above self."

I think, looking at the problem and where we all need to go together, is that it must be a team effort, and not only does the business community have an obligation, and not only does the school have an obligation, we need not to point our fingers at each other.

We get so caught up in controversy that we lose sight of what the problem really is. The problem is that every life, young life, that goes on the street because a judge has found from a survey that the typical person who comes before them, they can identify by the lack of education that they have, so this is what we are faced with in our society.

So we get caught up in just saying, "How did you figure your percentage of dropouts?" You know, "Are you covering up?" You know, it is immaterial about percentages. The important thing is the number of lives that go on the street.

You know, in my day, we used to have the old truant officer. We don't have truant officers anymore. I have heard ever since I was a boy and observed in a small town that you have to go to school until you were 16 years old, and I hear that and see that that is the law now.

But it is my understanding that there is no penalty. We, each year, provide a list to the proper authorities of individuals who are under the age of 16 who are not actively enrolled in school, and I say nothing is done about it.

When we ask, they say, "What can we do? There is no penalty." All you can do is talk to the parents. The easiest thing is to do nothing, until we bite the bullet and take a position that there is going to be a law, that it is an important one.

We enforce other things. We enforce having a Social Security card for work, we enforce going into the Army during times of war, we enforce paying your income tax. We enforce all these things. And we also enforce certain health care. So what could be more important?

And we heard here from Sheriff McMillan and from the others of the problem to society that these individuals—if we don't have hold of them out here, there's not much we can do with them.

He's talking about the SHO/DI abusers, that they ought to be in school. Eighty-some percent he said don't come back. And then the sad thing is the ones they associate with.

These SHO/DI kids—and I wish the sheriff had mentioned to you—the major problem is, they are leaders. It is shocking at the influence that they have on other teenagers.

So the ones that we are being successful with, identifying those who associate with them and getting it through to them.

But how many mothers who come to me as superintendent, tears in their eyes, say, "Mr. Sang, I know my son should go to school, but what can I do? There's no father in the home. I try to get him to go to school. He just won't go to school."

I say that we need the authorities and the authorities need the authority to see that they go to school or get into some kind of a program.

And there are those critics who say that there are some students who would be better off not going to school. I think the age should be extended.

I think the responsibility should be for every youngster in the United States that they be enrolled in some type of a program, whether it be a formal school that we know as school or whether it be a type of a work program, where at least there would be supervision until the age of normal graduation.

I maintain that we do that, we will see a greater America, or we will see a reduction in crime. At least we will have our fingers on them.

And there are controls that can be placed on this. So, in summary, it is a cooperative effort, and I am convinced, from the experience that I have had in this business for many years, that we will see things improve, because, when we have individuals such as yourself, that you are paying attention to it, when we think about something, we have a tendency to do a better job.

We call it to the attention of the community where we can work together. There are just too many young individuals.

All one has to do, if you want to take a ride, you can ride out to the beach today, if it isn't raining, then they get inside where you can't see them, and they're driving up and down our beaches, and you will see youth there.

And you will say, "Why don't you go get them?" Well, I want you to know that, if we all go get our own children, we will have people from all the States in the United States out there picking up their kids, because they are from all over the United States.

It is a major problem, and I commend you and the others who are putting their attention to this important matter.

Senator CHILES. Well, I thank you very much for your remarks, and it is good to hear about Duval County's efforts to identify potential dropouts early in the game and your dropout retrieval activities and coordination for these activities with other agencies.

You mentioned in your testimony that coordination is now taking place between the vocational education and business community. What do you see as the role of vocational education in abating the dropout problem?

Mr. SANG. The vocational program offers an opportunity to many children. I think that what one has to recognize in the field of education is that what appeals to one youngster doesn't appeal to another, and so we have to take many different directions.

There are those who can be very successful in life not only financially but be happy without going to college, and we know what the pay is for the crafts, but they need a skill in this day.

And, unlike just a few years ago, they need to have the basics in order to be a carpenter and to actually be in the crafts.

Because of the technology that we have today, no longer can you just walk out of grade school and do those kinds of jobs and really obtain a job.

I meant to mention to you that, in identifying youngsters, a youngster to be a dropout, it shows up early. A youngster who has a habit of missing school as an elementary child, and for whatever reason or reasons the parent or parents don't get him there, you can pretty well say, there is going to be your dropout, because there are those who say it is related to grades. The grades are very closely related to those who go to school.

As far as their attendance, if they are not there, they don't get the information, then they drift behind; and, as they stay behind, it is just a matter of, really, waiting for the magic age of 16, because they have heard their parents say, "You have got to go to school until you are 16," or until the parent gives in and lets them drop out.

That is why we have to enforce this law and make sure that these youngsters are in school.

Senator CHILES. You mentioned, which we know is so true, that parents have a tremendous role to play, and, when that parental strength is there, you are really not going to see the dropouts probably occur to start with. How do we increase the parental involvement? What can we try to do about that?

Mr. SANG. Well, we have had a successful program here that, in fact, we have been able to document, that, where parents are involved in school, children do a better job academically.

And so, under our project that we call education is a family affair, we have open house each year, which we will start this month. And we encourage parents to come to open house.

In fact, last year, we had over 115,000 parents and adults to come to open house. There isn't any school district in the country that can boast of that.

And we find that it makes a difference because, when they come there, we have found that a problem that we had faced became a very small problem just through open house.

We were looking at all types of ways to keep youngsters from forging their grade cards. Send a grade card home, and they'd forge it, sign the parent's name on it, send it back. They would change grades on it. They would do different things.

And then we mailed them. They would beat the parents home, the parents would be working, and they would intercept, get the mail, and take it out of the mail.

Well, you see, at open house, we have a calendar that we provide them. Now we can talk directly to the parent. We tell them not only when the grade cards are going to come out, we tell them when the tests are going to be given, and we encourage them to put that right on their calendar and encourage them to follow it, when to start having the students really get down to study, when to get a good night's sleep, and when to expect that grade card. That makes a difference.

But there are those parents that try but still don't know how to control their children. And I can give you actual ease after case.

Already this year, I had a mother call me, and she was in tears about, she says, "My son won't go to school. What can I do?"

And they are crying out for help. And many times we are successful. That is why I like to use many different ways, because it must take a change in attitude. There must be something there that motivates that youngster.

Sometimes pressure can do it. And I strongly urge those who continue to say that we need programs, we need to pump more money in, I say that we need to enforce our laws.

Senator CHILES. I am interested in the rotary proposal, your competition. It sounds like to me that that has a tremendous potential, especially for a lot of these youngsters who don't seem to have anybody who does care and don't seem to recognize the potential that, if they drop out now, it is going to be costly later.

That seems to fit, again, with the compact that Commissioner Castor was talking about, the education compact again, that we are going to sign students up, that there will be a job available if they stay in school, and if they make the grades.

I am delighted to see that kind of effort, because I don't think we are going to solve this with legislation, Federal, State, county regulations, or anything. It is going to take involvement.

Mr. SANG. May I give you an example?

Senator CHILES. Yes, sir.

Mr. SANG. A mother called me 1 year ago. The father died some 7 or 8 years ago. The mother is employed by the Navy and would leave before the youngster would go to school.

The student made the highest score on the scholastic aptitude test made at one of our top high schools, had done that 3 years in a row. He would not go to school. He had been one of what I call my national super 100 scholars.

I talked with him, told him to come back for a few days. Then he would drift back into whatever the problem might be that was bothering him.

I found out, in discussing with him about what he liked most, he said, "I like computers." And I tried the approach that was mentioned by the commissioner, talking about what it will do for you.

I said:

You know what's going to happen to you? You're going to have a job one day—there will be no computers—even if you don't finish high school, but you are going to be working here and giving out all these ideas, and there's going to be this dude standing over here that you're going to be so mad at you won't know how to control it, because he's going to be making twice what you make, and you know it's your idea that he's capitalizing on, but you're not going to be able to get the monetary reward out of it because you don't have an education, because it takes that to be that one in charge.

To make it short, even though we tried these new ways, we'd go out there and get him. I had a report come in at my office every day to tell me whether Sean was at school. If Sean wasn't there, I'd send out and get him and take him to school.

That only worked so long. So a businessman in the Arlington area said he would help, the idea of the rotary. He talked with Sean, and he happened to have in his business computers.

He hired him on a part-time basis, and we have a success story to tell. We have finally found that magic thing, a businessman who talked computers, who brought him in, showed him the need, and he saw a reason for changing his attitude. That is a success story.

SENATOR CHILES. That's wonderful. Thank you very much. We are delighted to see you again, and your efforts that you are making, and I think Duval is certainly going to be a leader in proving out some of these things.

MR. SANG. Thank you.

SENATOR CHILES. Now for our last panel, we will be talking about "Concerns of Parents and the Schools." And we have Mrs. JoAnn Digiandomenico, Dr. Alvin White, and Kathy Bell. Mrs. Digiandomenico is president of the Florida Parent Teachers Association. She served as the president of the Florida PTA and made dropout prevention one of the priorities of the organization. She is going to be focusing on the concerns of parents and the effects of the dropout problem at home, in school, in the community, and the family.

Dr. White is a assistant area superintendent and former teacher. He taught in the public schools for some 11 years and has worked extensively with high school dropouts and potential dropouts.

Prior to becoming an administrator, he was principal at Ribault High School, a predominantly black high school in Jacksonville, where he conducted a program known as project BASE, blacks for academic success in education.

We think that program is an example of a success story. And I understand you are a dropout yourself.

And Kathy Bell, representing the Florida Teaching Profession. So we are delighted to see you. We will start with you, Mrs. Digiandomenico.

STATEMENT OF JOANN DIGIANDOMENICO, PRESIDENT, FLORIDA PARENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Mrs. DIGIANDOMENICO. Thank you. I am JoAnn Digiandomenico, president of the Florida PTA, but I am know as Dijon. It is a lot easier to say.

Senator CHILES. Yes; that is easier to say.

Mrs. DIGIANDOMENICO. The impact of school dropouts in the family and community can't be described in a few words. Dropouts can destroy. It sounds harsh and too simplistic. However, everyone is affected, not only the individual but the family, school, and community.

The dropout has a higher incidence of unemployment, or the job is menial. Therefore, there is welfare and social service dependency.

The dropout has no self-confidence, no ability to compete or survive; and, in most cases, they become unproductive citizens.

The dropout may become a runaway or get involved in drug use. This puts stress on the family and, of course, damages the individual's health and well-being.

The dropout has trouble with the law. He may participate in vandalism, theft, et cetera. This is a problem for the whole community. Insurance costs increase and the safety of every citizen is questioned.

There are ideas regarding possible solutions with preventative recommendations. Parents must stress the importance of attending school, participate in the school activities. Attitude about school must be re-evaluated. Support the schools.

Students must have a good self-esteem, avoid study halls unless structured, have school spirit, be involved in school activities, participate in a peer tutoring program, schedule classes according to need, and develop a sense of belonging.

Teachers must meet the needs of the student, have positive attitudes, provide quality classroom instruction, realize the cultural differences and socioeconomics, monitor the student progress frequently, have good communication with the parents, receive in-service and early identification of potential dropouts and the practical application of research data.

Schools must provide an environment conducive to learning, mandatory in-service for instructional personnel and principals on the early identification of potential dropouts and the practical application of research data, have a good recordkeeping system for absenteeism and cutting of classes, instructional programs to meet the needs of the student, vocational education, job placement, work-experience programs, bilingual education, migrant education, provide assistance with class scheduling, expand the counseling and the guidance services extracurricular activities available to all and provide the transportation; community education, provide continuity with each school level, K through 5 with

the 6 through 8 and the 6 through 8 with the 9 through 12 programs, incentives for staying in school, conduct an immediate followup of why individual students drop out.

The community can provide job-skill training made available. Agencies must cooperate, meeting the needs of the potential dropout and the dropout.

Social and health services must be provided. There must be children service and family agencies. City government must provide recreation and job opportunities.

The justice system and law enforcement agencies have major roles in cooperation with the school system.

Volunteers can notify parents of absenteeism and cuts from classes, tutor, and just talk time, one on one.

The U.S. Congress must listen to the needs, provide the necessary assistance, funding for programs to address the dropout problem.

The State legislature must implement the recommendations of the task force last year made by FLorida, and funding.

Dropout prevention is a shared responsibility of the home, schools, students, and community. There can be a decrease in dropouts if we all work together, putting emphasis on staying in school.

The National PTA supports the Dropout Prevention Act that is in the Congress, and also the Parents as Teachers that Missouri has that Jack Levine had spoken to earlier.

I just returned from a National PTA Board meeting where that program was discussed, and some of the State presidents will be visiting Missouri to look at that program, to see what we can do in the other States.

Senator CHILES. Thank you very much.

Dr. White.

STATEMENT OF DR. ALVIN WHITE, ASSISTANT AREA SUPERINTENDENT AND FORMER TEACHER

Dr. WHITE. Thank you, Senator, for allowing me to have this opportunity to testify on what I personally consider a very important subject, because I firmly believe that the success of this Nation is built certainly upon education.

If, in fact, we don't address it and solve it, then that could be one of the contributing factors to the downfall of this Nation.

So I commend you for your efforts, and I only wish that others would do the same thing.

Each year, more than 1 million young people join the ranks of Americans who are poorly equipped to face the demands of an increasingly complex society. National statistics reveal that over one-half of these dropouts are minorities, either blacks or Hispanics.

State and local statistics do not reflect this national average. An American educational resource journal defines a profile of a public school dropout as being a 16-year-old white male that lives with both parents who earn an annual income of under \$20,000.

In Duval County, our statistics reveal that twice as many whites drop out than blacks, and, surprisingly, in predominantly black schools, the dropout rate is somewhat lower.

Those same statistics show that although a black student may come from a single-parent home with a low income, he will remain in school at least 1 year longer.

There are many factors contributing to this lower dropout rate among the blacks in our area. One assumption is that there are a significant number of black families who consistently emphasize for their children the need to get a good education. They try to make them realize that the only way out of a poor economic situation is through completing school.

Another factor attributed to this lower rate is the supplemental support services from area churches and community organizations. Such groups as the Urban League, black sororities and fraternities assist students by offering incentives and conducting workshops to help better themselves through education.

Our school system, as Superintendent Sang has just testified, is a major factor to that success rate in retaining black students.

Years ago, Duval County had the foresight to begin early identification procedures of potential dropouts and established alternative education and retrieval programs.

For example, statistics show that nationally and locally more black females drop out of school because of pregnancy. Our system established the Young Parents Program to assist those students.

Child care facilities and extensive counseling services in this program encourage them to return to regular or alternative education programs after the births of their children.

From a minority perspective—and I say a minority perspective because, as I talk on "Dropout Prevention: A Minority Perspective," it is important to understand that I did not say the minority perspective.

Any person you have to testify here who is black or Hispanic or a minority will give you the perspective as it relates to their experiences, their growth, their work, their research, and the like, and so my perspective is a perspective rather than the perspective.

From a minority perspective, we realize that none of these groups can solve the dropout problem alone. Families, churches, community organizations, and schools must continue to work diligently and cooperatively to continue the quest for a better society through education.

As one addresses the impact of dropouts on the black community, it is safe to say that a dropout has a negative impact on any community whether it be black, white, Hispanic, or integrated.

We are fully aware that the crime statistics favor the dropout. We have heard the sheriff, and we have heard SHO/DI mentioned. Frustrated dropouts will be one of those SHO/DI's, as we mentioned. He will commit a crime anywhere.

Since the majority of blacks live in the black community, their crime is in that black community.

As these youths see the drug dealers, observe their elegant dress and flashy cars, they decide that in order to get out of this dilemma, they have got to get some fast money. They see the fast money as the pushers and the dealers making it, and so that becomes their own motto.

I was a dropout, as you have mentioned. I did not have the experience of dealing with the drugs, and I had the experience of the peer pressure even then, as these youngsters mentioned here earlier this morning.

That peer pressure hasn't changed, it has only become more intense, I thought I knew everything and yet I didn't know anything. I was in the eight grade. I'm sure my parents loved me. I think my teachers loved me. But I didn't feel special. I think I wanted attention.

And so, every morning, I decided, I picked up my books, would leave home with the intent to go to school, as far as my parents were concerned. They both worked. My mother worked as a waitress at the beach, and my father worked at two jobs. And so they were gone. They loved the four of us, otherwise they would not have sent four of us to college.

I think, though, as I deposited my books in the cemetery, near a place called Durkeyville, and went back up to do whatever my peers decided that we should do, I felt that I was accomplishing something. I just felt like I was somebody, even to the point of getting a job. I bagged groceries in a supermarket after I came home from football practice, because, you see, even though I didn't go to school, I did go back for football practice after school.

Nobody missed me. If they did, maybe they just didn't care, or they were glad that I wasn't there, but I went back for football practice.

And, one day during the school day, the coach came into the supermarket for whatever reason, and he saw me. And he and the manager discussed what I assumed was why was I there.

They started walking toward me, and I yanked off my apron, bolted the counter, and started to run. And, as I ran down Davis Street, the coach chased me. And somewhere along the line he picked up a stick; and, whenever he came within striking distance, I felt the wrath of that stick wherever it landed on my body.

For whatever reason, he was saying, "You're going back to school, Alvin; you're going back to school, Alvin." I did. I ran right on campus.

The principal was about 6 feet 4 inches and 280 pounds, a very visible man, and I ran right into his arms. He carried me, literally carried me to his office, lectured to me and then paddled me. He called my mother, and she left work, came home; and, when I got home, my mother lectured to me and then she too paddled me.

My dad worked two jobs. He'd get home around midnight. I was in bed waiting for the inevitable. He lectured to me and he paddled me.

By that time, though, I didn't find it so amusing. I had had enough. I decided I was going to run away from home. I did. I was a Huckleberry Finn comic book reader. I liked the way he traveled. I gathered

my few clothes in a sheet, broomstick, and left home around 2 o'clock in the morning.

I went from Durkeyville to Blodgett Homes where my grandmother lived, because I was her favorite grandchild. And, as I traveled that distance, a couple miles at night, knocked on the door, she came downstairs, and I began to tell her how these people had mistreated her favorite grandson.

Well, she went upstairs, and she dressed, and she came back downstairs with a long brush, and she too paddled me from Blodgett Homes to Durkeyville.

And, by that time, I thought that these people really and truly must care about me. I am not advocating that that be the way we show our children that we care, but I felt then that they must really and truly care.

And I think the moral of this true story centers around my having attained the feeling of self-worth and high expectations from those individuals I respected highly.

This can be applied to today's perpetual dropout, for vehicles must be designed to create a feeling of self-worth, because potential dropouts do not—do not—have a positive feeling about themselves.

Therefore, a healthy concept is very important to student success in school. We also see the black community impacted by the number of families on welfare or aid to dependent children.

Many of the recipients of these subsistences, especially teenagers, are, in fact, dropouts themselves. Because they don't have a high school diploma or a worthwhile vocation, they rely on receiving these monthly checks, and this, as we know, makes them dependent on the system.

Their children see it, and it becomes the norm rather than the exception. And so, whatever time of the month, it is called mothers' day, the day on which the checks arrive, their children are aware of it, their children's children will be aware of it, and then it will be one vicious circle.

What then is the answer? Parent groups and school officials must continue to identify children with special problems or needs and work on them for early identification. Procedures must continue to be adopted and enforced that will identify and place children requiring supplemental educational services as accurately as possible.

We are facing this in Duval County, and there is much more to be done. And, finally, I can only speak as a dropout, that if I had had that feeling of self-worth, that feeling of self-dignity, that challenge, because I never spoke to a guidance counselor in 12 years of school, never once, and I would think that, had I had that opportunity to get that feeling, then I would not have dropped out even for that one-half semester.

And I certainly, again, appreciate the opportunity to relay my experiences to you and ask that you continue your efforts in addressing this important problem.

Senator CHILES. Thank you very much, Dr. White. And now Miss Bell.

STATEMENT OF KATHY BELL, PRESIDENT, FLORIDA TEACHING PROFESSION

Miss BELL. Senator Chiles, it is good to see you again. As we discussed yesterday in Tallahassee, we certainly appreciate your representing your interest in the dropout problem.

Dropouts in the public school system, though, are no more an isolated problem than many of the other student needs that must be met daily by teachers, such as substance abuse, inappropriate behavior, truancy, individual learning styles, and even the daily trials of our young people who attempt to learn and mature through the public school system.

Their problems are dealing with peer pressure, surviving academic trials—I think the fear of geometry is passed generation to generation—and yet becoming independent of their parents.

All these crises are faced daily by youngsters in the public school system, and the great majority of them face them, conquer them and prosper to that state of independence and literacy the public schools espouse.

However, when the system and society at large fails to support students through these continuing growth stages and the crises, we have disturbing results.

Last year, among the young of 19 in Florida, 40,013 dropped out of school, 984,760 were arrested for delinquency, 15,273 became pregnant, 4,237 received treatment for substance abuse, 412 died of alcohol-related auto accidents, and 82 committed suicide.

The causes of these alarming figures are myriad, and we do not know all the factors behind them. What we do know, however, seems to point to both socioeconomic status, emotional neglect, learning difficulties, language-cultural barriers, poor home support, or being pushed out for lack of achievement, as our major causes.

Beyond these troubling factors that affect the everyday lives of teachers, the impact on the public school education system is expensive.

Consider the loss of State revenues and decreased student enrollment, the cost of reeducating those students through repeated grades, and cost of crime and vandalism on school property.

Over 83 percent of dropouts between the ages of 13 and 19 end up in juvenile institutions and reform schools.

Teenage mothers who produce at-risk children who also enter the public schools, more costly public education programs to meet the needs of the dropouts.

An uneducated public constituency who has apathy for public schools, these statistics and their impact on our public education system are well documented, and I will not belabor that problem further.

Instead, we at FTP/NEA are committed to becoming a real force in solving the problem. To that end, we have set aside funds from our membership at the State and the national levels to support dropout prevention efforts.

The NEA is already underway with Operation Rescue, a program funded with \$1.7 million of dues money to enhance our local associations' efforts to join the community and State to stem the tide of dropouts.

Pinellas PTA has received such a grant for Operation Rescue, and we hope to further such programs with our own State commitment of \$15,000 from FTP/NEA members during 1987-88.

Each member has set aside 50 cents to contribute to dropout prevention grants between the NEA, the State, and the local school districts.

We urge you to provide clear channels through cooperative NEA and FTP participation and funding in the regulations for the new Federal moneys that are available to the dropout prevention recovery programs.

Beyond the immediate effects to stem the tide of dropouts, we also urge your particular attention and bold action on early identification for significant prevention efforts.

Recent studies of the Head Start Program as well as the Perry Preschool Study have shown fewer dropouts, fewer teenage pregnancies, fewer arrests and fewer on the welfare roles of those who attended preschool over those who have not.

Florida data for studies conducted in Pinellas County have shown that dropout-prone students can be identified as early as first grade. Florida reports more than 63,000 3 and 4 year olds who live below the poverty level. Only a scant 20,000 of those are currently being served in the public preschool programs.

Concerned Federal effort will be necessary from State and private agencies to expand those services.

In conclusion, the members of FTP/NEA appreciate your efforts on behalf of the public, and we offer our hand and assistance and look forward to being partners with you and others as we forge the long-distance solutions to this ever-growing problem. Thank you.

Senator CHILES. Thank you very much. Mrs. Digiandomenico, does the PTA work with families of atrisk children to help bolster family support?

Mrs. DIGIANDOMENICO. We are doing that now. We are visiting the different countries in Florida, teaching parents how to be involved in their child's education.

Senator CHILES. Now, let me ask you, my experience in PTA goes back quite a few years, but I had four children in the system, and I remember when my parents were in PTA.

I am confident a lot of the parents of some of these dropouts were not PTA members. Is that correct?

Mrs. DIGIANDOMENICO. That's correct. But I am sure that we also have parents that are involved in PTA that have children that are dropouts.

Senator CHILES. I am sure there would be some that might, but I would suspect that a lot of them are not, that are working parents, or we know that a lot of dropouts come from homes that have problems, they are broken up or something else.

How does the PTA outreach to those parents? is what I was going to question.

Mrs. DIGIANDOMENICO. Well, hopefully, when the State PTA sends information to the local PTA's, then they will in turn reach the parents in their schools. So that every body will be involved.

And, also, we visit home. In some of our counties, we go into the home where there are—they have invited us in to talk to them.

Senator CHILES. That is different from my experience with PTA. We used to go, and, you know, we met maybe four times a year, but it seems like to me I was forced to go to a couple of those meetings a year, you know, once a semester at least. Either my kids or my wife said, "You've got to go." And I went.

But, at that time, there was no kind of outreach, nobody thought about that. I will have to say that an awful lot of the parents were involved, and there were others that were like me, they were dragged in there, you know, to be there, but there was no kind of outreach, and we didn't recognize this as being much of a serious problem.

So now it would seem, for the PTA to function very well, it would have to be active.

Mrs. DIGIANDOMENICO. Yes; we do. And it is according to what school you are in. If you have an effective PTA, then, of course, they are getting out there. When you meet four times a year, some parents, they just come to meeting and that's it. But we are striving to be more involved.

Senator CHILES. Now, having said that lightly, there were some times that I was very involved, depending on the school, and depending on what the leadership was and all, and the parents did function and help provide air-conditioning and some things ahead of the time in the schools, so there were times in which the PTA was very involved.

Mrs. DIGIANDOMENICO. I think, after you become involved in PTA and visit the schools and go to the meetings, you will find that there is a difference, a big difference.

Senator CHILES. What Federal programs would you encourage that we enhance to help States and localities maximize their investments in preventive programs?

Mrs. DIGIANDOMENICO. Well, the funding part, of course, would be necessary, and we are participating, as I said before, with the Parents as Teachers.

And, also, we are involved with the NEA's project Operation Rescue, so any areas—I think awareness is the most important thing that the U.S. Congress, and the funding, would be the important things.

Senator CHILES. Dr. White, we certainly thank you for your remarks, and you are a great example of a dropout who has succeeded, and I am very proud and pleased to see that you have dedicated so much of your life to help people to see that they avoid dropping out.

How do you think teachers can best help students deal with those pressures that might lead them to drop out?

Dr. WHITE. Well, I think, first of all, the students themselves must have the greatest admiration for that teacher, and that teacher must in turn have a great admiration for that student.

And, together, if they can develop the confidence in each other, that feeling that, "I really care about you, student," male or female, and I think that is the first step toward working against the peer influence.

I think the expectations of that teacher with the student, you see, because I know students may not stand up and say, "Hello, I want to be taught," I think, if we realize that they are doing this by human nature, they want to be somebody, they have got to respect that teach enough, and that teacher must expect from them the fact that they are going to be somebody and not lower their expectations.

That is the crux of what I see the peer influence. I think that teachers must reach out, must continue to reach out beyond the school day, and which a significant number of them do. They must be actively involved in community organizations, who are in turn being actively involved in the kinds of things that we have spoken about.

For example, in the churches, we know that if you ever believe that there are black leaders, then look to the churches. The church itself is a typical example of black leadership in these United States.

And, by tradition, this has been a fact. And so, with involvement of teachers and administrators, in cooperation with the ministers in the church, then they too can assist as role models, trying to guide them into certain directions regarding the proper attitude and the feeling of self-worth.

Senator CHILES. I think it is very interesting, your figures, that you actually have fewer blacks dropping out of Duval County than you do whites, because that does go counter to the national statistics, and it does show that there is a community and parental involvement here.

That must be weighing heavily into that, at least in the black community.

Dr. WHITE. Yes, sir; but not almost where we want to be. I think there was just this weekend, there was a feeling, a meeting, rather, among a group called Us. They met about Us, meaning black students who are—teenage pregnancy and these kinds of things.

In this meeting were those persons who consider themselves as community leaders, and I think the more of that awareness that we have within the black community then, of course, the better we are going to be able to help ourselves.

But, at the same time, it is still my opinion that there is a need, because, you see, I believe, if the school, if the parent won't come to the school, then the school must go to the parent.

Mrs. Digiandomenico just mentioned about going into the homes. I would love to see, by whatever mechanism possible, churches, civic groups, or whatever, being given opportunity to apply for grants in order to establish programs such as this to go into the community and work with the children.

Senator CHILES. Kathy, what do you think is the most important thing that teachers can do to help abate the dropout problem? I noticed, it was interesting listening to our panel of students, that many of them involved names a counselor or someone, a teacher, who helped them, and, of course, we know that counselors provide a very important role, but I am sure they can't do it all either. It can't all fall on the role of the counselors.

Miss BELL. Well, it seems to me that one of the things, as a teacher, that I felt the greatest need to do is to work with individual students and yet found the major barriers to doing that both in the time framework and also just the physical ability to get together with that student.

As you know, just the plain logistics of meeting a student in a private place in a school is almost impossible. The seven-period day that has just been instituted in Florida in the last few years has wiped out almost all the time that a high school teacher, within the framework of the school day, has to work with a student either in small groups or individually.

I think every teacher, or a majority of our teachers are more than willing to work individually with students and really see that as their given task, is to bring to the student that really needs that extra effort, that time.

My mother was a teacher, and I can remember she would talk in terms of having people in her classroom so she could go work with an individual student, and I have not had that luxury.

Senator CHILES. Do you believe that teachers that are involved in the actual Dropout Prevention Program, that they are receiving adequate training?

Miss BELL. I always like to say that we can always use more. I think that most of the ones that are in the dropout prevention programs are doing that through the in-service projects and so forth that are run.

Or, if it is a particular grant, like, for instance, Operation Rescue, an Operation Rescue grant, then they are getting more than the regular teacher in the classroom, because that is a specific grant, additional training and additional work.

If you are talking about teachers within those grant programs, I think they are probably being adequately trained.

I think those of us that were in the field, probably the in-service programs that we are getting are not adequate.

Senator CHILES. JoAnn, I just want to say that I am delighted the PTA has put such a high priority on this. I think that is tremendously important. I think there is nothing stronger that we should have, and I am delighted to see that the teaching profession also is doing the same thing as well as the administrative leadership and the teachers in this county.

We are going to wrap up our hearing now. Again, I want to thank our panel and all of our members. I especially want to thank our young people. I think their interests in coming out, giving us their insight into this. The group that we did not hear from today is the group that is

still out, and some of those, I guess we might have to go to the jail to interview, I'm afraid, and we may do that before it is over, because I think we do need to hear from some of those. The ones that we are hearing from, even some that dropped out, come back, and we are delighted to see that, and to see that kind of example.

This is just a start of us trying to get some kind of handle on it. I am delighted to see that there is a core of leadership, that the State is recognizing the problem, knows that we have to deal with it.

I am sure that we have got an awful lot more job, a strong job to do to create the kind of awareness that this problem must have and the kind of attention to focus on it and have everybody, from the community leaders to the church leaders, parents to the administrators and the teachers, and those of us who are on the public service side of the political side also, deal with it.

CONCLUSION OF HEARING

But it is one that we have to deal with, and I think we are about that task now, and we thank you. And we will recess our hearing now and reconvene again tomorrow.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, September 1, the hearing was concluded, and the subcommittee was recessed, to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

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